

Docket No. AB-047U2

Remarks

Applicant acknowledges and appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 31-38 are allowed. By way of the present amendment, applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include subject matter from allowed independent claim 31, and respectfully requests reconsideration of claim 1 and the claims that depend therefrom (claims 2-19). Applicant has canceled claim 20, and claims 21-30 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Finally, applicant respectfully requests consideration of withdrawn claim 39, which applicant failed to elect in response to Examiner's restriction requirement. Such failure to elect claim 39, which depends indirectly from independent claim 31, was a typographical error. Applicant believes claim 39 is allowable, as it depends from allowed claim 31.

To summarize, applicant has herein amended claim 1, canceled claim 20, and requests reconsideration of claims 1-19 and 39. Twenty eight (28) claims remain pending in the application: claims 1-19 and 31-39, of which claims 1 and 31 are independent. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the pending claims, in view of the amendments above and comments below.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that, in paragraph 6 of the Office Action mailed January 13, 2004, the Examiner indicated that claims 31-38 were allowed. As claim 39 depends indirectly from independent claim 31, applicant respectfully requests consideration of dependent claim 39. In addition, applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include subject matter from allowed independent claim 31, and respectfully requests reconsideration of amended claim 1, and withdrawn claims 2-19, which depend from claim 1.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

In paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Lue et al (USP 4,565,005). As described earlier, claim 1 has been amended herein to include subject matter from allowed independent claim 31. Applicant believes this amendment puts claim 1 and the claims that depend therefrom, which includes rejected claim 4 and withdrawn claims 2, 3, and 5-19, in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

In paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action, claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Lue et al (USP 4,565,005). While not necessarily agreeing with this rejection, claim 20 has been canceled herein, rendering this rejection moot.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections have been overcome and the pending claims are in condition for allowance. An indication of allowability of claims 1-19 and 31-39 at an early date is earnestly solicited.

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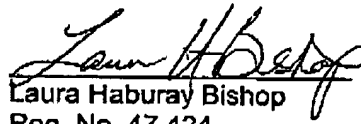
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The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Laura H. Bishop, at his convenience should any issues remain after consideration and entry of this response, in order to permit early resolution of the same.

Respectfully Submitted,

June 07, 2004


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